

# CITY OF MADISON

## Teleworking Tips

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Well-being is one of our City's most prized values - "We are committed to creating a community where all can thrive and feel safe." Even if you're not a member of an at-risk group, you can have an impact on the spread of COVID-19, so some of us will be teleworking for the foreseeable future.

Employees who telework often learn that working remotely is different than they expected and that it requires specific skills and habits. The following tips will help you get to work while at home.

### **Define your workspace.**

It can be easy to sit on the sofa with your laptop and expect to get work done. Experienced teleworkers will tell you they tried that and it simply doesn't work! We are creatures of habit and most of us are used to lounging with our laptops to read the news, watch TV, play games and chat with friends and family. Establishing a workspace, even if it is your kitchen table, gives your brain a cue that it is time for work and not play.

### **Master the basics.**

- Add your telework schedule to your email signature line
- Set up call forwarding and access your voicemail from home – see [IT Telework Toolkit](#)
- Know how and when to use the VPN and other online tools you regularly use – [see IT Telework Toolkit](#)
- Use Phone, Skype, or Zoom or to stay connected to colleagues - [see IT Telework Toolkit](#)
- Plan for a video calls/meetings by making sure you know how to turn on your computer's camera and microphone and being aware that your colleagues may be able to see the background behind you

### **Set daily goals, track them and share your progress.**

You may be surprised by how differently the work day passes without the comings and goings of an office to break things up or influence what you do next. Start each day of telework by writing down what you need to achieve and then track your progress. Pay attention to how long tasks take you and start adjusting your daily goals to match your current rhythm. Communicate with your supervisor and/or colleagues if you think your telework plan needs to be adjusted.

### **Eliminate distractions.**

If home is where your heart is then telework can mean pets, children or a favorite hobby are only a few feet away. Depending on your living arrangement, you may need to hang a "do not disturb" sign so your family members don't interrupt you. Pets often need a closed door to keep them away and you might need headphones to block the neighborhood noise. For more resources on managing the challenges of telework while parenting, as well as mental health and self-care during this period, please connect with City's [Employee Assistance Program](#)

### **Prioritize privacy.**

Whether you are in your home or a common area, take five minutes to assess the privacy of your workspace. Can someone standing behind you read your computer screen? Are your windows open so your neighbor can hear your phone call? What information do you need to secure before grabbing a cup of coffee or heading to the restroom? Your personal privacy matters too, so see if there anything around you that would not want visible during a video conference with your boss.

## Stay connected.

Many people say they do not call or instant message colleagues who are working remotely because they don't want to bother them. Remember, they are working, not vacationing at home! You should feel confident about calling or messaging an employee who is teleworking anytime you would walk to their office or call them if you were working on-site. You can even keep your daily coffee run – simply plan to call or video chat with a cup in hand at the time your crew would normally walk to your favorite espresso cart.

## Dress for work.

Just like sitting on the couch can make us feel a little too relaxed, wearing pajamas all day makes it hard to get into work mode. Dressing casually is definitely a perk of working at home but getting “ready for work” is a daily ritual that many teleworkers swear by.

## Take responsibility for your part in remote meetings.

Take responsibility for your contributions and the energy you bring to the space. Be prepared for more questions and for those question to take time to make it through all team members. Prepare for giving feedback by considering some key questions: 1) What did you see/hear/read/experience and 2) How did it impact you, your colleagues, or the community you serve, 3) What are some ideas for resolution?

## Use the appropriate technology.

- Internal Only Meeting with audio and/or video → Skype  
See [IT Telework Toolkit](#) for more information and instructions  
*\* Note: Always use the Skype client to join a meeting.  
Do **not** use a cell phone or personal phone.*
- City to External Meeting, audio only → Zoom  
See [IT Telework Toolkit](#) for more information and instructions
- City to External Meeting, video and desktop sharing → Zoom  
See [IT Telework Toolkit](#) for more information and instructions

### Conference Call Etiquette

**\*TEST YOUR AUDIO\***

1. Be on time
2. Announce yourself
3. Don't eat or drink
4. Mute yourself
5. Have a list of questions ready
6. Use chat bar to communicate technical difficulties
7. Send/read documents in advance of the meeting

This material is adapted from University of Washington Human Resources. For more information about the City of Madison response to COVID-19 please see [EmployeeNet> Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information](#)

## More great articles on telework (a.k.a. remote or virtual work or “work from home”)

- Working from Home: 7 Smart Tips to Help Your Get More Done (Fast Company)  
<https://www.fastcompany.com/90476020/working-from-home-7-smart-tips-to-help-you-get-more-done>)
- Teleworking Tips for Employees (University of Washington Human Resources)  
<https://hr.uw.edu/coronavirus/teleworking-tips-for-employees/>
- Resources for (Suddenly) Remote Teams (Zing Collaborative, Madison)  
<https://www.zingcollaborative.com/blog-content/2020/3/13/resources-for-suddenly-remote-teams>

**Need coaching, consulting, or support for telework from HR/Organizational Development?**

Email [OrganizationalDevelopment@cityofmadison.com](mailto:OrganizationalDevelopment@cityofmadison.com) or call the HR Main line at (608) 266-4615

